

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for tracking a special service delivery by a carrier of a mail item created by an office worker, the method comprising the steps of:

applying a special service indicator to the mail item during creation of the mail item;

sending the mail item to a mail room for final processing prior to submitting the mail item to the carrier for the special service delivery;

automatically detecting at the mail room the special service indicator on the mail item and determining the special service delivery required based on the detection of the special service indicator;

applying at the mail room a unique identifier to the mail item, the unique identifier including an electronic address of a company server;

submitting the mail item with the unique identifier thereon to the carrier for the special service delivery;

receiving from the carrier at the electronic address obtained by the carrier from the unique identifier on the mail item information relating to the location of the mail item;

storing the information relating to the location of the mail item at the company server; and

providing the office worker with access to the company server to obtain the information relating to the location of the mail item.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is a specific color associated the special service delivery.

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3. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein at the mail room the specific color is automatically detected and identified to determine the special service delivery required by the mail item.

4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the specific color is selected from a plurality of different colors, each of the plurality of different colors serving as an indicator of a different special service delivery requirement.

5. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is a label.

6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is printed on the mail item.

7. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is machine readable.

8. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information relating to the mail item includes an image of the mail item.

9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the information relating to the location of the mail item further includes date, time, and location data.

FOOTNOTES 26222660

11. A method for tracking a special service delivery by a carrier of a mail item created by an office worker, the method comprising the steps of:

sending the mail item to a mail room for final processing prior to submitting the mail item to the carrier for the special service delivery;

applying at the mail room a second special service indicator to the mail item, the second special service indicator including an identification for the carrier of the special service delivery required and a unique identifier including an electronic address of a company server;

receiving from the carrier at the electronic address obtained by the carrier from the unique identifier on the mail item information relating to the location of the mail item;

providing the office worker with access to the company server to obtain the information relating to the location of the mail item.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the office worker obtains the information relating to the location of the mail item using the unique identifier.

13. A method as recited in claim 12, further comprising the carrier assigning a carrier unique ID to the mail item and tracking the mail item during the special service delivery using the carrier unique ID, and wherein the office worker obtains the information relating to the location of the mail item without knowledge of the carrier unique ID.

14. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the first special service indicator is a specific color associated the special service delivery.

15. A method as recited in claim 14, wherein at the mail room the specific color is automatically detected and identified to determine the special service delivery required by the mail item.

16. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the specific color is selected from a plurality of different colors, each of the plurality of different colors serving as an indicator of a different special service delivery requirement.

17. A mailing machine comprising:
means for applying postage to a mail item having a first special service indicator thereon;
means for transporting mail items to the applying means;

means for detecting the first special service indicator and for determining a special service delivery required based on the detected special service indicator; and

means for applying a second special service indicator to the mail item, the second special service indicator including an electronic address and an identification for the carrier of the special service delivery required.

18. A mailing machine as set forth in claim 17, wherein the first special service indicator is a specific color associated with the special service delivery required.

19. A mailing machine as recited in claim 18, wherein means for detecting and determining detects the specific color and correlates the specific color to the special service delivery required by the mail item.

20. A mailing machine as recited in claim 17, wherein the electronic address is an electronic address for the mailing machine.

21. A mailing machine as recited in claim 20, wherein the electronic address is a URL.

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